GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:421
ANSWERED ON:23.04.2002
MELTING OF GLACIERS IN THE HIMALAYAN REGIONS
SURESH RAMRAO JADHAV (PATIL)

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the fact that fifteen thousand big and small glaciers in the Himalayan region are melting fast which may result in acute water shortage in the country during the ensuing ten years; and

(b) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to prevent fast melting of glaciers so as to ensure continuous flow of water from these glaciers to rivers like Ganga, Yamuna and Brahmaputra?

Answer

MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF OCEAN DEVELO
(DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI)

a)& b) A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) &(b) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.421 FOR REPLY ON 23.04.2002 REGARDING MELTING OF GLACIERS IN THE HIMALAYAN REGION

(a) Yes, the Government are aware of the fact that the Glaciers in the Himalayan region are shrinking gradually. As per the inventory of Himalayan Glaciers prepared by Geological Survey of India, there are over 7500 glaciers (big and small) in the Indian part of the Himalaya. The recession of glaciers is a natural process sensitive to climatic fluctuation wherein the rise in global average temperature (called global warming) results in melting of the glaciers in extents varying with their locations as well as seasons.

(b) The studies carried out in the Himalayan Region have indicated that these Glaciers are passing through a phase of recession.The rate of recession in different climatic zones of the Himalaya is found to be different in different years. Studies indicate that during the coming ten years the rate of recession is not likely to reach an extent which could cause water scarcity. The measures taken to reduce the effect of human interference on glaciers include conservation activities such as afforestation, removal of garbage and promotion of sustainable eco-tourism.